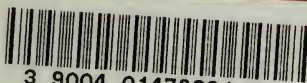


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FUTURE CORN SUPPLY:

FOREIGN OR CANADIAN ?

BY

ROBERT WILKES,

(LATE MEMBER OF THE DOMINION PARLIAMENT.)

From the Canadian Monthly and National Review.

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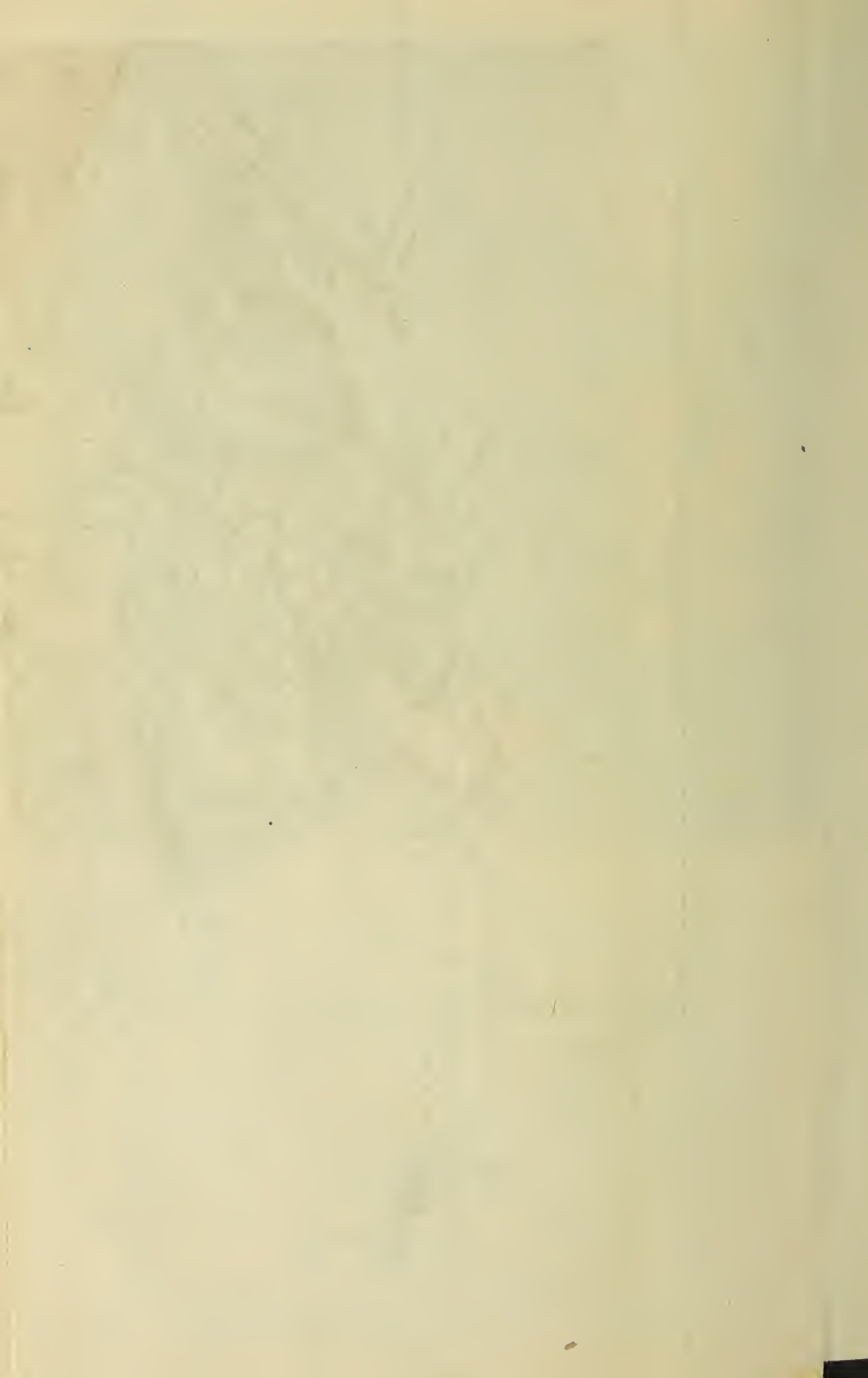
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BRITAIN'S FUTURE CORN SUPPLY.

GREAT BRITAIN'S adverse balance of trade has long been a special subject of discussion, some regarding it as of no serious importance, while others recognise in it symptoms of commercial decline. The steady increase of this unfavourable balance not only in volume, but in its proportion to exports and to the increase of population, is specially deserving of attention. Twenty years ago, the total exports of one hundred and fifty-six millions sterling were eighty-seven per cent. of the amount of the imports, while in 1877 the exports were but sixty-four per cent. of the amount of the imports. Taking two decaded periods, 1859-68, and 1868-77, the average of the first period was, imports, two hundred and fifty millions, exports, one hundred and ninety-six millions, or seventy-eight and one-third per cent.; and of the second period, imports, three hundred and forty-six millions, exports, two hundred and seventy millions, or seventy-eight and one-third per cent., being a slight gain, but comparing with 1876 or 1877, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter part of the period. When viewed in relation to population, the first period shows imports *per capita*, of eight pounds, eight shillings, exports, five pounds, four shillings, or sixty-two per cent.; and in the latter period, imports, ten pounds, sixteen shillings, and sixpence, exports, six pounds, fifteen shillings and eightpence, or sixty-three per cent.—a gain of one per cent. On the last two years of the period (1876-77) the exports only average fifty-three per cent. of the amount of the imports per capita.

These large and increasing imports consist chiefly of two classes, *Food Staples*, and the *Raw Materials of Manufactures*. During the

second decadal period referred to, the former class of imports were as follows :—

Wheat, Corn and Flour—annual average ...	£46,000,000
Tea	11,000,000
Sugar	20,000,000
<hr/>	
Annual average total.....	£77,000,000,

or about twenty-two and one quarter per cent. of the total importations. The latter class during the period was

Cotton, annual average	£57,000,000
Wool, “ “	20,000,000
Silk, “ “	9,000,000
<hr/>	
Total annual average.....	£86,000,000

These three raw textile staples amount to twenty-five per cent. of the total average import. If to the above be added timber, averaging say, twenty million pounds per annum, the results in all amount to over fifty-three per cent. of the total imports. To the Food Imports has now to be added, meat from America, live and dead, which will bring the total for these classes to about sixty per cent. of the average imports.

I propose for the present to consider chiefly the item of “corn” supply and its principal sources, and whether there be no alternative for the United Kingdom, but to continue to pay gold to strangers for her bread-stuffs, in excess of her immense exports of manufactured articles. Protectionist writers on the American side often attribute the unfavourable balance of British trade to the supposed decline of English supremacy in manufactures; whereas it actually results from the enormously increasing consumption of food and raw material of foreign growth.

During a period of years, the supply of corn has come chiefly from Russia and the United States. As far back as 1854, the latter country sent almost one-fourth out of a total of eight millions of quarters.

In 1859, Russia supplied about one-fourth of a total of ten millions of quarters. But since then the proportions have been remarkably reversed. During the five years, 1873-77, the total "corn" imports averaged a value of fifty-four millions sterling. Of this Russia sent a little over four millions, or $7\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., while the United States furnished nearly twenty-one millions sterling, or $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., per annum. During the first nine months of 1879, the United States is reported to have sent the enormous proportion of about sixty per cent. of an unprecedentedly large importation.

In 1877, the total imports from the United States were seventy-eight millions, and the exports to the United States, sixteen millions, or about 20 per cent.; showing a balance of trade against the United Kingdom with the United States of over three hundred millions of dollars. The total excess in the United States of exports over imports in 1878, is returned at two hundred and sixty-five millions of dollars—so that more than their total excess is with Great Britain.

Russia, in 1877, sold Great Britain to the value of twenty-two millions sterling, while she bought of strictly British produce, only a little over four millions, or about 18 per cent. of the value of her exports to Great Britain. Few will dispute the maxim that, in so far as it can possibly be guarded against, no nation should be dependent for her vital supplies on either hostile or rival nations.

In ships and the material of war, Britain constantly supplies her rivals; she herself never depends for these upon foreign assistance. Indeed, she does not depend upon private domestic sources; the nation maintains vast establishments for the manufacture of her own armaments of war.

However numerous the enemies of Britain may be, her danger of armed invasion is not imminent. Her defences by sea and land are her security. Britain's danger rather consists in being compelled to buy her food and raw material from rival nations, and to pay for them in gold, while these nations not only exclude her manufactures from their markets, but compete with her in countries where they could not sell their raw materials.

While England thus pays vast sums to strangers for natural products, the wages to produce which in no way benefit her own people,

she has, on the one hand, an immense home population, insufficiently employed, and, on the other hand, accessible territories, won by the bravery and enterprise of her sons, and still held by the Crown, suitable for the production of all the food and raw materials that she can possibly consume.

The problem for British statesmen to-day is, how to utilise those resources, so as to benefit the nation and make the empire absolutely independent of foreign countries for its vital supplies, in peace no less than in war.

Hitherto, the great colonies have been peopled through the necessities of the individual emigrant. Badness of trade, failure of crops, or personal misfortune of various kinds, have induced persons in the mother country to emigrate. They brave the ocean passage, and the greater risk of obtaining employment or finding a settlement under new and often uncongenial circumstances. During a visit to Manitoba, last summer, when nearly a hundred miles west of Red River, I met a ribbon weaver from Coventry. He had toiled with his little effects in ox-carts, for five days over the wet prairie from Winnipeg—and had yet several days further to travel before settling his family on a free “homestead.” Emigrants such as this endure great privations, but they ultimately succeed; yet I could not but feel that as a representative of the class of voluntary immigrants by whom the great North-West is destined to be peopled, the Coventry weaver was suffering disadvantages, to a large extent, due to the *system*.

Mr. Froude, in the *Edinburgh Review*, some time since, urged assisted Imperial emigration to the Colonies, instancing the result of the opposite policy in the case of the Irish exodus to America. But no Government has hitherto been found prepared to favour such a scheme; nor has it been influentially advocated by the press or in Parliament. Emigration hitherto has been individual, not National or Imperial. It is, therefore, very unlikely that the British taxpayer will consent to an outlay in which he has no direct advantage, merely to relieve the home labour market, to benefit the unsuccessful surplus population, or to people colonies, that in return may exclude his manufactures by protective tariffs.

To gain the consent of the British people to an expenditure for emigration, it must be shown that the outlay will be beneficial to the home population; and that while the Colonies are being developed, increased trade and greater independence of foreign nations will result to Great Britain.

The imports of foreign and colonial cereals have now reached the enormous value of over sixty millions sterling, per annum. The growth of this vast product has furnished no employment to the British people, nor has the profit upon it, in any way, benefited the British taxpayer. It has, indeed, been landed at the ports, chiefly in British bottoms, and so has yielded employment to Great Britain's unrivalled commercial fleet, but there the commercial benefit has ended, for the price has to be paid in gold.

Instead of thus paying strangers and rivals for her breadstuffs, why should not Britain produce them herself from lands of the Crown? If the manufacture of their own ships and war material by the British Government can be justified on sound principles of political economy, is it unreasonable to produce the food of the people? The alternative is no longer avoidable, Britain must continue to enrich rival nations from which she purchases her corn, or she must produce it for herself as a National enterprise. In the history of nations, the opportunity seldom arises to utilize vast tracts of fertile Crown Lands, within easy access to the mother country. Britain enjoys this rare opportunity to-day in the Dominion of Canada!

Within fifteen days of Liverpool there is an unlimited area of fertile prairie land, as yet uncultivated, belonging nominally to "The Crown." In less than five years this territory could supply the whole British market with grain of a quality unsurpassed in the world. All reports by competent judges concur in the opinion that the great fertile belt of British North America—stretching westward a thousand miles from Red River—will in time become the wheat-field of the world. In a few years it will have railway communication with the seaboard, as well as unequalled water highways. It therefore only requires labour and capital for its development, and for placing the entire British people who are its inheritors in complete independence of all foreign food supply.

Individual colonization must naturally be slow, and as such settlers cannot be expected to have Imperial objects in view—no matter how great may be the tide which flows towards this “illimitable wilderness”—it cannot result in such timely development as to overtake the demands of the British markets, and so to outstrip foreign competitors.

Instead of such fitful and tardy settlement, I propose that the Imperial Government re-acquire extensive tracts of land in Manitoba and the North-West territories, and that such lands be cultivated exclusively for the growth of corn and cattle directly by the Crown. By arrangement with the Canadian Parliament, the lands—some of which are held as railway reserves—could readily be acquired at a fair valuation. British labourers could be sent under labour contracts to cultivate them, and the entire surplus product could be profitably sold in Britain on Government account.

These lands are now held at prices, varying from one dollar (4s.) per acre to five dollars (20s.) per acre, the latter being for the belts nearest to the Canada Pacific Railway, now under contract from Winnipeg westward. The reserved belts might be left to unassisted settlement; for there are thousands of square miles within reasonable reach of outlets that are fertile beyond conception, and that could be acquired for the maximum price of one dollar per acre.

The descriptions which have been published concerning the resources of this northern territory, have naturally been received in Britain with considerable incredulity. Preconceptions of a country only known as the former domain of a vast fur-trading company could not naturally be favourable, and actual observation, on any extensive scale, has been so recent that the British public may well be excused if they have thought of it not as a fertile, but as a frozen wilderness. I may, therefore, quote some remarks here concerning it, from sources exceptionally well informed, or not likely to be unduly prejudiced in its favour. The *Pioneer Press*, a paper published at St. Paul, Minnesota, makes the following statement:—

“Within the isothermal lines that inclose the wheat zone west and north-west of Minnesota, which is being, or is to be, opened to cultivation, lies a vast area

of fertile lands, from which might easily be cut out a dozen States of the size of New York."

The lands referred to are all within the British American North-West. Mr. Wheelock, the official statistician for the State of Minnesota, remarks concerning the wheat area of the United States that—

"The wheat-producing district of the United States is confined to about ten degrees of latitude and six degrees of longitude, terminating on the west at the 98th parallel. But the zone of its profitable culture occupies a comparatively narrow belt along the cool borders of the district defined for inland positions by the mean temperature of fifty-five degrees on the north, and seventy-one degrees on the south, for the two months of July and August. This definition excludes all the country south of latitude forty degrees, except Western Virginia, and north of that it excludes the southern districts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, while it includes the northern parts of these States, Canada, New York, Western Virginia, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Red River and Saskatchewan Valleys. In general terms it may be stated that the belt of maximum wheat production lies immediately north of the district where the maximum of Indian corn is attained."

And he remarks further :—

"1. That physical and economical causes restrict the limits of wheat culture to the seats of its maximum production, in less than one-third of the States of the Union, within a climatic belt having an estimated gross area of only 250,000 square miles, from which nine-tenths of the American supply of bread and a large and constantly increasing amount of foreign food must be drawn.

"2. That within this zone the same climatic and other causes tend to concentrate the growth of wheat in the upper belt of the North-Western States, always preferring the best wheat districts.

"3. That Minnesota *and the country north-west of it* is the best of these wheat districts, having the largest average yield, the most certain crops, and the best and healthiest grains."

The whole wheat-growing area of the United States is thus estimated at two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) square miles, whereas the fertile belt of British America embraces an area of four hundred and fifty thousand (450,000) square miles, estimating nothing higher than 55° north latitude. On the far western plains

the isothermal line of wheat culture undoubtedly reaches considerably north of this limit. It can therefore readily be seen that the most extensive wheat fields of America are on the British Canadian side of the line.

Professor Macoun, during the past season, made an official inspection of a very extensive portion of the North-West. His opinions concerning the soil and climate are therefore not only the most recent, but they are undoubtedly the most reliable, yet published. He is reported to have spoke in a recent lecture as follows:—

“From the 102nd meridian, he had journeyed due west over $13\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of longitude, the course embracing a little more than two degrees of latitude ; in other words, he had travelled 650 miles west from Fort Ellice, on a line extending 150 miles from north to south. Within these limits were included 100,000 square miles—a territory of vast extent.

“In the country lying to the south of the Assiniboine, south of the Qu’Appelle and east of the 103rd meridian, there are 800,000,000 acres of land, scarcely any of which is second-class, nearly all being of the highest excellence. Nevertheless, being destitute of wood, all this land would remain unsettled for years to come, were it not for the abundant supply of coal. There will, without doubt, very soon be a rapid immigration from Rock Lake.

“North of the Qu’Appelle River, and extending westward as far as the 105th meridian, lies a region containing not less than from 6,000,000 to 10,000,000 acres, which can with certainty be pronounced of excellent quality. There is not a finer region in the North-West than that extending along the southern base of the File Hills and the Touchwood Hills.

“The facts concerning the rainfall are these :—As the heat in the spring increases, the rains increase ; then, shortly after the summer solstice, they decline, and by the last of August, or earlier, they cease altogether. After that a period of six months commences, during which there is very little fall of rain or snow ; and, with this period, the year ends. The operations of the season of vegetation are as follows :—As soon as the warm weather of the spring commences the snow melts. Then, when the frost is out of the ground to the depth of five or six inches, the farmer sows his seed. During this time there is scarcely any rain, but the frost underneath keeps melting by degrees. The roots of the young plants keep following down, after the frost, and increasing in size, till the latter part of May. In June and July, both the air and the earth are warm, and everything rushes to quick maturity. Next comes the dry fall, when the grain can be harvested without injury. These general characteristics apply to the climate of the whole of the North-West, and the same results are everywhere observable over tracts embracing 300,000 square miles. One impor-

tant result is that hardness of the grain which comes largely from the dryness of the autumn. Another important result is the adaptation of our immense plains to the raising of cattle. The whole of the south-western plains, which formerly yielded food for the buffalo, will, in our day, become covered with cattle. Many persons have said that the vast plains to the south of Battleford are too exposed for the raising of stock ; but God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. The admirable adaptation of the climate renders the successful raising of cattle practicable where, under other circumstances, it would be impossible."

The special adaptation of the soil and climate of this vast territory to supply the food requirements of Great Britain cannot be disputed. All that is necessary to attain this result are CAPITAL and LABOUR, and these Britain commands without limit.

I will assume, what is certainly within the mark, that, for an outlay of twenty millions sterling, a territory larger than England, Ireland and Scotland, could be secured. Out of one hundred millions of acres, tracts adapted for cultivation could be acquired equal to the full area of the whole United Kingdom, which contains about seventy-seven millions (77,000,000) of acres—a large percentage of which, especially in Ireland and Scotland, is not under cultivation.

Important drainage works, and the building of rail and tramways, might cost two millions more. The conveyance, shelter and first maintenance of an army of contract labourers from Britain, and the necessary implements for their work, would probably bring the whole capital outlay to twenty-five millions sterling. This at three per cent. would entail a charge upon the Consolidated Fund of six hundred thousand pounds per annum.

For this outlay the Crown would hold in fee, through a Royal Commission, a veritable "New Britain" in the heart of the continent. All the appliances for agriculture on the most extensive scale, entrusted to a male and female labouring population of over half a million, which with such soil and appliances, would show results that would astonish the world.

In ten years, lands brought under such cultivation could be sold if need were, for from two to five pounds per acre, to the very persons sent out to cultivate them, if to no others. The investment would, therefore, undoubtedly yield a profit on a large scale whenever it

was considered prudent, on the part of the Crown, to relinquish the enterprise, and this profit would be a direct gain to the Home taxpayer.

As the result of actual enquiry upon the spot during the past summer, I estimate the cost of wheat to the individual producer in Manitoba to be about thirty-five cents per bushel—equal to 1s. 5½*d.* To make full allowance for outlay on a large scale, I would estimate wheat grown as proposed to cost sixty cents per bushel—one dollar (4s. 2*d.*) per cental—or say one half-penny per pound. Such wheat is grown, and can be grown, yielding forty bushels to the acre. As soon as railways now under construction are completed, the average cost for carriage from any central point to Liverpool *via* Montreal and Quebec, would be about from sixty to seventy-five cents (2s. 6*d.* to 3s. 2*d.*) per cental, making the cost at Liverpool 6s. 8*d.* to 7s. 4*d.* per cental—equal to 28s. 9*d.* to 34s. 6*d.* per quarter. If to this calculation five per cent. for commissions and charges be added, it would still leave the cost of wheat in British ports from 30s. to 36s. 6*d.* per quarter. The enterprise would thus almost from the first be self-sustaining, yet if ten years' interest were added to the capital outlay the profit would still be large.

If it be said that the delivery of wheat so produced would be ruinous to the British farmer, it may be answered that it would be sold only at the market price, as now, but with this important difference between it and foreign wheat, that it was grown by British labour on British soil, and that the profits on its sale would accrue to the British taxpayer. There can be no question but that the immense imports of American wheat into British ports of recent years, coupled with deficient harvests, have greatly discouraged British agriculturists. They feel that land, stimulated by artificial manures, and costing an annual rental of from 30 to 40 shillings per acre, cannot compete with virgin soil costing in fee simple but a nominal sum. It is true that the yield per acre of wheat lands in England is greater than in any other part of Europe, averaging about 26 bushels per acre, which is greatly in excess of the average yield of North American lands; still, in the face of increasing imports, the average wheat cultivation in England of three millions of acres is likely to decline.

This does not necessarily imply a permanent reduction in the value of English lands, but merely a change of products. In the colonial times, over a hundred years ago, wheat was extensively grown in the valley of the Connecticut River, in New England; and less than 50 years ago the Genesee Valley, in the State of New York, was celebrated for its wheat. Now its cultivation is almost abandoned in these districts, for they cannot compete with the western prairies. Still the lands are more valuable than ever, for tobacco, fruit, and other products are now profitably cultivated on the former wheat fields. In England similar changes must occur with the growth of population. She is likely to become a *gardening* rather than a farming or stock-raising country. Thus the decline of wheat culture is more likely to increase the value of British lands rather than to lessen it.

Some discussion has taken place concerning the adaptation of the North-West for stock-raising; it is claimed by many that cattle may be wintered in the shelter of the wooded streams in the severest weather, and that, like the Indian pony, they will scrape the dry snow from the grass. I think that no reliance can be placed on such statements as applied to cattle-raising on any important scale. In all the northern and eastern sections of the territory, cattle would require winter housing; yet, as during the winter months farming operations proper are suspended, abundant labour would be available for profitable employment in attending to stock. The true test is the cost of food. At present hay can be obtained from the natural meadows without limit. I have heard the value of the saving estimated at two dollars (8s.) per ton, but I consider this too low. It can, however, be safely estimated at not more than four dollars (16s.) per ton, delivered at reasonable distances from where it is cut. Root crops are grown in great perfection, averaging, it is said a thousand bushels to the acre. Coarse grain can also be grown, producing the highest yield. There is, therefore, no room for doubt that fat cattle could be raised at a low expenditure on the very territory chiefly devoted to wheat growing.

Beyond this, however, the plains of the South-West are specially

adapted for grazing. Concerning a very large district, Professor Macoun is reported as saying :—

“The suitability of the Bow River country for stock-raising is attributable in a great measure, to the Chinook winds, which, coming from the south-west, from Arizona, Wyoming, etc., greatly tend to modify the climate, sometimes raising the temperature 60 degrees in two hours. The dry atmosphere is regarded as a cause of the low temperature not interfering with vegetation.”

These western plains could be stocked with young cattle from the Texas herds, and a cross could soon be obtained which would yield cattle better adapted for the British markets than any now raised in the American territories.

Under competent overseers, no better herdsmen could be found than the native Plain Indians. The buffalo is fast disappearing before their indiscriminate slaughter by the white man and the Indian. The only salvation for the Indian is to employ him as a herdsman of cattle, and thus ensure him maintenance. The Indian tribes on British territories have generally been peaceable and always loyal. If kindly treated and wisely employed they will remain faithful. The attempt to convert these nomads of the Plains into farmers is an unreasonable one. After a long period some, no doubt, may be induced to cultivate the soil ; but the true and profitable employment for the Prairie Indians is cattle raising. Concerning them the writer above quoted says :

“The Blackfeet and the Sioux were the finest men, physically, in the North-West. The Sioux at Prince Albert ask for work that they may earn something to purchase food. When men talk about danger from Indians, they do it for place or for plunder ; for, wherever there is an Indian war or scare there is place, and, when supplies are scarce, there is plunder.”

Professor Macoun mentions instances of actual starvation having happened among the Indians by the failure of the buffalo, while the crops of settlers in the neighbourhood were left undisturbed. The Indians on both sides of the line respect Englishmen and Canadians both of whom in the west they call “King George Man.” The British people owe it therefore to these faithful tribes, whose titles have

been ceded as far as the Rocky Mountains, to furnish them with a means of livelihood, by the investment of capital in stock-raising, from which it is certain that the return will be tenfold.

Of the millions who have emigrated from Great Britain and Ireland, many have carried, rightly or wrongly, a memory of by-past wrongs; others a consciousness of neglect, and of disadvantages and privation, suffered in the struggle for existence. In the peopling of this, the last fertile region, within reach of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon races, it is of great importance to reverse the former feeling. Men conveyed by the nation to distant fields, assured of employment, and a bright future opened for themselves and their children, would certainly entertain for the mother country not only the feelings of loyalty, for which all colonists are distinguished, but a warm sense of gratitude which would bear practical fruits in later years.

The vast North-West offers a free area for all peoples—for the Icelanders, for the Russian Mennonites, for the Norwegian, the Swede, the Dane, and the German; but above all, it offers a home for the British people. To them it affords an unequalled opportunity of developing British Institutions on a grand scale, believing as they do, that, under such institutions, there is enjoyed civil liberty and social order, unequalled by that of any other system on the face of the earth.

In the settlement of the older Provinces of the Dominion, from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes, the lands being chiefly wooded, an unnatural system was adopted. The townships were surveyed and laid out in farms of two hundred acres, on each of which, one or two solitary families settled, to hew a home for themselves out of the forest. The early settlers were absolutely isolated, and were thus partly deprived of social, educational and religious advantages which might have been otherwise enjoyed. To this day, even in the well settled districts this isolation prevails, and has the injurious effect of tempting a large percentage of the youth to forsake the farms for the towns. The unparalleled town growth of America can largely be accounted for in this way. There is no excuse for the repetition of this error in the settlement of the prairie lands of the west. Nevertheless, such is still being attempted, both in the Western States of

the Union, and in Canada. The traveller by rail or water may anywhere descrie on the horizon the solitary dwelling of the pioneer settler, probably separated by miles from his nearest neighbour. The intervening tract may be held as a railway reserve at a fancy price or by speculators for a rise in value.

The rational mode of settlement is the *Dorf* system of Europe, only on a grander scale. The sites of agricultural towns should be selected by competent engineers, located not only with reference to the tract to be cultivated, but also with reference to the facility for drainage, the adjacency of coal or wood, and the general adaptation for healthful occupation. In this way many of the sites chosen would become populous cities during the present generation, and would, in contrast with the accidental locations of the great centres of population, be absolute sanatoriums. The construction of cheap sectional rail or tramways over the prairie would meet all the requirements of transit to labour and the removal of crops; but even without those there is no natural road in the world to compare with the prairie in the harvest season.

It may be supposed by some that the Canadian Government and people would view with jealousy such a vast Imperial establishment carried on in direct competition with their home agricultural industry. At first, no doubt, such objections might arise, but they would be based neither on justice nor on expediency. All public lands in the Empire are called "Crown Lands," *i. e.*—held by the Crown in trust for the *people*. "The People" surely means more than the residents of any particular colony—the emigrants of yesterday. It must be held to mean *the whole British people*, by whose enterprise and valour these lands across the seas were won.

"They, too, were created heirs of the earth and claim its division."

The British emigrant of yesterday has, therefore, no exclusive rights as against the British Immigrant of to-day, they have each claims upon the lands of the Crown, and the Crown has a claim on their services for the furtherance of Imperial interests. But the Canadian people have more than reasons based upon right and equity to cause them to acquiesce in a scheme of Imperial colonization.

They are absolutely committed to the vast undertaking of a railway across the continent from the Great Lakes to the Pacific. The interest on this outlay must be paid by the colonial taxpayers, or else the land reserves must be sold. No system of individual settlement can occupy these railway lands in twenty-five years; the "free grants" will attract actual settlers, even to places remote from railways, so that no large sales will be speedily made.

The advertising of the lands by a public company of contractors or otherwise would, no doubt, assist their settlement; but the continent has already had enough of "company" monopoly to lead to such a system being regarded with favour; and to incline Canadians to prefer any well considered Imperial scheme to one of grasping manipulation of the fair lands now held in fee simple for the whole British people. The conveyance of large tracts to the Imperial Government would, therefore, be at once a solution of the railway problem, and would also ensure a development of the country in ten years such as could not otherwise be obtained in fifty. All this would be immensely advantageous to Canada, at the very time that it secured the highest interests of the Mother Country.

Population is the great need of the Dominion of Canada. The outflow of British emigration during the past fifty years has mainly benefited the Great Republic. The future tide of unassisted immigration will tend to follow in the wake of its predecessor. Nothing, therefore, can so rapidly people the Canadian North-West as an Imperial scheme, mainly based upon Imperial objects.

A large majority of the Canadian Parliamentary constituencies, (although a small one of the Canadian people), has, in 1878, declared in favour of a protective tariff. Such a policy to be successful, above all, requires consumers; these would be furnished by the proposed scheme. All the implements of husbandry would find an immensely increased demand, and in such the Canadian makers are not surpassed in the world. Domestic woollen and cotton clothing, blankets, boots and shoes, and numerous other staple supplies are almost exclusively produced in the Colony for local use, and the trade in these would necessarily be benefited. The Lake and Maritime Provinces would in this way become to the North-West what the

New England States are to the Western States, and the stimulus would, produce an unprecedented development in all the Provinces. The products of the Imperial colony would not be offered in the local markets, and could not therefore depress them. The fruit of this new industry would of course meet the colonial exporter at all British ports; but he would then have only to compete with Imperial wheat, as he now does with American and Russian grain; while on every cental of the former his country would make an indirect profit, and the Empire to which it is his pride to belong would become independent of the foreign wheat fields of the world.

The Canadian Liberal press and its leaders predict an early reversal of the protective policy. This is not likely to be realized. Following the precedent of the United States, the manufacturing interests will acquire increased political influence; and the agricultural majority are, for the most part, indifferent to questions of this nature while they themselves enjoy moderate prosperity. If the Imperial colonization scheme were carried out, the dominant province would soon be neither Ontario nor Quebec, but Manitoba, or provinces to the west of it. These would be largely peopled by men of British training, and of British trade ideas; colonial manufacturers would therefore soon have to compete with British goods without regard to tariff, for the wheat and cattle growers of the West would never consent to the artificial exclusion of the better value products of the mother country by a protective tariff.

This view might tend to prejudice the present dominant Canadian party against the scheme; but their necessities, and probably their patriotism, would assure their concurrence.

Beyond all mere questions of trade policy, I advocate the speedy settlement of British America with a people loyal to the British constitutional system, as a counterpoise to the Republicanism of the United States.

One hundred years ago the population of the revolted American colonies numbered about four millions. North of the lakes and the St. Lawrence was almost unbroken forest; the population, including the French colonists, hardly numbered five per cent. of the successful revolutionists. To-day, after the lapse of a century, during which

the peoples of the world have been thrown into the lap of the Republic, the then Canadian wilderness numbers a loyal people, about equal in number to those lost by George III., that is, about ten per cent., instead of five, of the present population of the Great Republic. These have built cities, established factories, created canals and railways, raised cattle and developed agriculture, in a ratio which compares most favourably *per capita* with the Republic. They maintain a commercial navy not only beyond that of the States, but fourth in rank among the nations of the world. A country showing such results under many disadvantages deserves to receive a trial on an ample scale. It may then demonstrate to the world that material prosperity can be obtained under the well tried British system, equal to that which is witnessed under a republic, if not even greater; the system of government often erroneously receiving the praise which rightfully belongs to a virgin soil and unexampled variety of natural resources.

Great Britain possesses in Canada the chief element that she lacks at home, an unlimited fruitful soil. Its most southern boundary is the forty-second parallel, and more westwardly the forty-ninth. In Europe this latitude would place Niagara Falls and Toronto on the southern boundary of France, and Winnipeg in the position of Dieppe. Nor are these localities actually belied by the summer heat, or the perfection of their fruits and cereals. The peaches ripened on the Niagara River and on the south shore of Lake Ontario are not easily surpassed in France; and the wheat of the Red River district is certainly not excelled in Normandy. During the past summer I experienced heat in August on the Assiniboine River, a hundred miles west of Winnipeg, that I never knew exceeded in Paris. The vastness of the American Continent, stretching far towards the North Pole, does indeed give a far colder average winter than that experienced in the same latitude of northern Europe, but this severity, does not retard, but rather increases the fertility of the soil.

The immense territory from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains has a northern slope. The Nelson River, which empties into the Hudson Bay, from Lake Winnipeg, drains the valleys of the North and South Saskatchewan rising in the Rocky Mountains;

the Assiniboine rising in the Touchwood Hills, 52 degrees north and 7 west of Fort Garry; and the Red River, which rises to the south, in the American territories. This area is almost one-fourth the size of Europe. In the far west the Peace River flows east, through a canyon of the Rocky Mountains, watering an immense upland on which wheat is said to ripen admirably. The Peace River is a tributary to the Great Mackenzie River, through Lake Arthabasca and the Great Slave Lake, also draining the Great Bear Lake, and emptying into the Arctic Ocean, carrying the waters north of 55°, from a vast area of which but little is known, but admitting of immense possibilities in the hands of a hardy pioneer race. While the elevated regions to the south of the line are saline deserts these northern territories, owing to the lowness of level, are well watered, covered with deep vegetable mould, and abundantly fertile. There is, therefore, a British territory half as large as Europe, within the wheat growing isothermal lines, that is capable of producing in abundance, the products of the temperate zone. This country only awaits the occupation of it by a hardy population to be able to supply all the corn and cattle required by the mother country, and to develop British institutions on a scale beyond all previous possibilities.

“I hear the tread of pioneers of nations yet to be;
The first low wash of waves, where yet shall roll a human sea.”

In the history of the world there is no parallel instance where a race and a system of Government have thus enjoyed a second opportunity such as is now within the reach of the British people. America, with its broad, free acres, is apparently the chosen field for the development of the Saxon and Celtic races, as the British Islands clouded by the sea fogs, and washed by the northern ocean, were their cradle.

Through false conceptions of the rights of the colonists, and the lack of appreciation of their importance to the Empire, the original thirteen colonies, with their flourishing western offspring were lost to the Crown. Stretching from Massachusetts Bay to the Gulf of Florida, what fairer field could be desired for the growth of the tree

of liberty; a plant which flourished in its island home during ages when it was lost to other nations?

The colonists of those days, rather than struggle longer to right a temporary injustice, flung away the constitutional system which was their priceless birthright.

Thoughtful men alike of the North and of the South now admit that there are fearful risks to the ark of liberty tossed upon the stormy ocean of a Republic of manhood suffrage, and guided only by the helm of a parchment scroll.

On the northern, but larger half of the continent, there is yet a splendid field for the development of the British system, administered by a British people, who will be the yeomen proprietors of the soil. Municipal government is already established; Provincial and Federal organizations exist that admit of unlimited application, and a system of national education is founded, that will compare favourably with any in the world.

Here, then, is a great opportunity for English statesmen. By a moderate investment they can inaugurate a system that will furnish desirable employment to a large section of their own people; and that, in a few years, will produce from British soil, breadstuffs, provisions and cattle enough to support Britain's utmost necessities, and make her mistress of the food markets of the world.

Britain can thus relieve herself from dependence, either in time of war or peace, on hostile or rival nations. She can witness in one generation the unprecedented growth of a prosperous and loyal people sprung from her own loins, and enjoying the legitimate development of her own institutions. She can thus span the American Continent, and afterwards girdle the earth with a chain of British peoples, speaking her language, enjoying her literature, her institutions of civil and religious liberty, and, in spite of her faults and the calumnies of her detractors, become more than any other nation a blessing to her own race and to all the peoples of the world.



